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Global Agricultural Information Network

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FSSAI Publishes Draft Manual on Food Import Clearance System

Report Categories:

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

FAIRS Subject Report

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Report Highlights:

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) published a draft manual that explains procedures, documentation, and other requirements needed to export food products to India. FSSAI has not noted when the final version of the manual will be published, or whether any of the current import procedures/requirements will change.

General Information:

Introduction:

On October 17, 2013, The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) published a draft document entitled, “Manual on Food Import Clearance System (FICS).” This draft manual explains procedures, documentation, and other requirements needed to export food products to India. Moreover, the document describes the role and responsibilities of importers, custom house agents, food testing laboratories, and the authorized officers of FSSAI, who inspect and help determine whether imported foods meet the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act 2006. FSSAI has not noted when the final version of the manual will be published, or whether any of the current import procedures/requirements will change.

Background:

Since 2010, FSSAI has been creating new import procedures and processes. For example, on December 28, 2011, FSSAI launched a web-based food import clearance system which allows for an importer to apply for a “no objection” certificate online. Because of these new procedures, FSSAI created the draft “Manual on Food Import Clearance System” to explain the overall import clearance process. Because the manual is still a draft, it is important that exporters maintain close contact with their agents on import procedure.

The manual covers the following topics:

- i. Overview of Food Import Clearance System implemented by FSSAI
- ii. General Procedures and Inspection by Authorized Officer; General Steps involved in FICS explained with the help of a flow diagram; and procedure for online FICS
- iii. Powers and duties of the Authorized Officer
- iv. A detailed instruction of Do’s and Don’ts that is required to be followed by the Food Importer, Custom House Agent, and Food Testing Laboratories (Notified and Referral)
- v. Import related documentation
- vi. Sample size as specified in Chapter 2.3 of Food Safety and Standards (Laboratory and Sampling Analysis) Regulation, 2011
- vii. Director General of Foreign Trade Notifications on Food Import
- viii. Glossary of general terms used under FICS

The complete draft [Manual on Food Import Clearance System](http://www.fssai.gov.in/) can be found on FSSAI website <http://www.fssai.gov.in/>.